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SUBJECT: SECURITY COUNCIL CONSULTATION AND FRIENDS GROUP
MEETING ON BURMA

11. ACTION REQUEST - The Burma Group of Friends will meet on July 23, with SYG Ban presiding. The Security Council will receive a report on the political situation in Burma from the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA) on July 24. USUN is instructed to draw on the points in para 2 below in its interventions in both meetings. End action request.

12. Begin points:

I would like to thank Special Advisor Gambari for his briefing to the Group of Friends and express the support of the United States for his continuing efforts on behalf of the Secretary General's "good offices" mission. There has not been satisfactory progress in Burma, and the Security Council must continue to review the political situation in that country and address the lack of response by the regime to requests by Special Advisor Gambari and the Security Council for the release of political prisoners and for genuine dialogue leading to democratization and the release of political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Today I would like to make three points:

-- First, we regret that the Government of Burma has ignored repeated Security Council requests for the regime to take all necessary measures to address the political, economic, humanitarian and human rights issues that are the concern of its people and to release all political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Despite the Council's call for a free and fair vote, the Burmese regime conducted its May constitutional referendum in an environment of fear and intimidation, promulgating new laws prohibiting free debate. It again extended Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's detention. It continues to beat, arrest and imprison individuals who have peacefully expressed alternate views to those of the regime or protested the sham "roadmap to democracy." The Government of Burma must heed the calls of the Security Council and ASEAN by immediately releasing all political prisoners and immediately beginning a genuine, transparent and inclusive dialogue with all democratic and ethnic minority groups and with the support of the United Nations.

-- Second, in its appalling response to Cyclone Nargis, which inflicted horrific death and suffering on the Burmese people, the regime first blocked international relief efforts, including access to supplies for cyclone victims, and then imposed bureaucratic impediments in an attempt to control the process for its own ends. Although access for humanitarian aid experts has recently improved and aid is getting to at least some of those who desperately need it, the regime continues to limit international aid workers' ability to travel to and conduct aid operations in cyclone-affected areas.

-- Third, the United States fully supports the statement by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers at their meeting in Singapore expressing disappointment that the regime extended Aung San Suu Kyi's detention, as well as calling for immediate release

of all political prisoners and for the regime to engage in a genuine dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi and other democratic and ethnic minority leaders to achieve a democratic government. Without these steps by the regime, the Security Council will have no choice but to address this continued intransigence, since the political conditions in Burma will continue to deteriorate, along with Burma's stability and the welfare of its long-suffering people.

End points.

RICE